

Washington, Dc: Congressman Ron Paul, along with several of his House colleagues from coastal districts, recently asked the Department of Commerce to investigate questionable foreign shrimp industry practices. He introduced legislation in January designed to help the struggling domestic shrimp industry by reducing burdensome regulations and ending U.S. taxpayer subsidies to foreign shrimpers. Especially troubling to Paul is the amount of foreign aid given to countries that import huge amounts of shrimp into the U.S., including Thailand, India, Vietnam, China, Ecuador, Indonesia, and Brazil.

The independent International Trade Commission (ITC) recently issued a report warning that unfairly subsidized foreign trade threatens the domestic shrimp industry. Congressman Paul is encouraged by this preliminary ITC report, which draws needed attention to the troubles facing shrimpers in the Texas Gulf coast and beyond.

The Southern Shrimp Alliance, which has filed its own petition with the Commerce Department, summarized the foreign subsidy problem as follows:

“A variety of financial incentives provided by national government and international institutions over a number of years have over-stimulated the infrastructure and production of farm-raised shrimp in many of the targeted countries. This overproduction...means that ever-increasing volumes of foreign shrimp are entering the U.S. market at ever-lower prices.”

“American shrimpers should not be forced to pay taxes that subsidize their foreign competitors, but that’s exactly what happens with our current foreign aid policies,” Paul stated. “It’s unconscionable that we’re using American tax dollars to help foreign shrimpers import shrimp cheaply.”

The Commerce Department is expected to issue a preliminary determination in June.

